

Army Acquisition Workforce Human Capital Strategic Plan town hall Oct. 20, 2016

QUESTION:

[HCSP - National Unions](#)

Have the Unions at the National Level been notified of the HCSP? If so, what was the outcome?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question and concern. The Army DACM Office did reach out to the Assistant Army G-1 for Civilian Personnel (AG-1 CP) and was advised that the requirement for coordinating with the unions holding national consultation rights with Army applies to proposed substantive changes in conditions of employment. As there are no substantive changes in conditions of employment inherent in the AAW HCSP, there is no need for national union consultation at this point. Generally speaking, AG-1 CP does not send Commands'/organization human capital plans since they are broad objectives and not specific changes.

QUESTION:

[HCSP Road Map](#)

Sir, in the current road map that is circulating here at the Detroit Arsenal, it suggests that the Senior Service College Fellow is necessary in order to achieve competitive consideration in the Key Leader Positions of the future. If master's degrees in Project or Program Management or in one career discipline are enough, why the additional exclusivity of the SSCF program?

RESPONSE:

I believe strongly in our DAU-Senior Service College Fellowship. For those who have already completed a Masters, they still should have a desire for maintaining their professional relevancy. SSCF is not set up as a program focused on a degree. Our Fellowship has our students actively engaged in critical thinking particular to current acquisition issues. I hope you consider applying for our next announcement which will open in the December/January timeframe.

QUESTION:

Sir. Thank you for the response. If I may, please allow me to re-phrase. The time commitment to complete my master's degree which was 2.5 years part time (completed before SSCF was created) plus the 1 month of CES Advance Course already took significant time commitments away from home and family. To make another 1 year commitment of SSCF and then a 1 year developmental assignment away from my current assignment are the two main distractions keeping my from applying for SSCF. What I am struggling with is what significant career benefit would one expect to receive from SSCF that I didn't already receive from my Master's Degree in Project Management from the Naval Postgraduate School? The Army and I have already made a significant investment in my career and I feel a bit odd going back to request another advance degree from a DAU accredited program.

RESPONSE:

I understand your concern. The SSCF Program is designed to address leadership competencies and experiences which are different than a degree program, and we have ensured to have this specific program at three main hubs (Huntsville, APG, and Warren) to reduce travel and time away from family. While there is not a requirement to have SSC/SSCF completion to successfully compete for GS-15 or even SES positions, it is highly encouraged and even sometimes a discriminate. The benefit of attending locally at Warren is that you would not be away from your family save one highly valuable OCONUS trip and a visit to the Army War College. I firmly believe our Fellowship will enhance your already sound skills and broaden your way of thinking.

QUESTION:

[Acquisition career field alignment to Career Programs](#)

In support of Goals 2 and 3 will the HCSP address aligning acquisition career fields to Career Programs for the civilian work force?

RESPONSE:

Great question! Yes, there is an initiative focused on partnering with Career Programs to ensure they understand our Acquisition Career Field focus as well as we understand Career Program focus. Alignment is also a focus.

QUESTION:

[AAW HCSP and the Defense Performance Management Appraisal Program](#)

The AAW HCSP purpose, end state and goals seem to merge or nest in parallel with the Defense Performance Management Appraisal Program (DPMAP). Goals one through five within the AAW HCSP seem to lay the groundwork to become "elements" for supervisors and employees to discuss and build short and long term goals (professional and personal). Was this intentional planning to have a core set of goals for all acquisition employees? How do you see this goals nesting with DPMAP?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your questions. The beauty of the AAW HCSP is that it nests well within many strategic plans. Each goal was determined based on a SWOT analysis and is specifically intended to be broad in scope and more fine-tuned via objectives and initiatives. Shaping our AAW (Goal 1 - Workforce Planning) to understand what we have now, sustain and maintain that talent, and work toward what we need in the future is key. The AAW must be focused on readiness in providing equipment and services our Soldiers need to win across multiple missions, conditions, and geographies, now and in the future. The basics of Developing our entire AAW (Goal 2 - building short & long term goals) to understand the capabilities needed for the future and ensuring we have a world class AAW is critical from entry to senior level. Our focus on leadership development (Goal 3) is to specifically identify our AAW at every level who have leadership potential and focus efforts on raising the bar there and truly developing the talent we have within the AAW. Goal 4 is focused on AAW engagement and nests within the Army E2 concept; our efforts here are developed to address day one entry into the AAW all the way to ensuring our AAW leaders are involved at every level and retaining the AAW; all focused on the Army's #1 priority - Readiness! Goal 5 is one of our major challenges; our AAW is so geographically and command-dispersed that we need to find a better way to connect across the

AAW enterprise as well as share best practices. The better aligned we are to the DPMAP, other organizational/command HCSPs, the Army, and the DoD - the more successful we are in the end.

QUESTION:

[Placement of SSC graduates upon completion of school](#)

Please discuss the process for placing new graduates of the Eisenhower School and the SSCF Program into positions in the Acq Workforce that are commensurate with their prior experience and newly acquired knowledge. Thank you.

RESPONSE:

I appreciate you starting this conversation. My first action when becoming the DACM in 2014 was to stand up a Talent Management Cell in the Army DACM Office. This team has worked some major efforts and started some process concepts with one being the post-utilization of talent at our Senior Service College programs and those in CSL PM or PD positions. Our concept is a hands-on approach to understand the graduate's proposed path forward early on in their first few months at SSC. This year, the TM cell will again visit and/or coordinate directly with each of our Army War College and Eisenhower acquisition workforce students to discuss their functional and geographical preferences. The plan is to collaborate with the Army G1 Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM) Office to ensure AAW students are placed in positions intended to leverage those competencies fostered at SSC and where the Army most needs their capabilities. Also this year, the TM team will work with the DAU-SSCF students and CDG fellows, to build a comprehensive process intended to incorporate all centrally selected programs into an enterprise level talent management strategy. Some of our initial concepts include executive educational opportunities for GS-14/15 equivalents and AAE directed assignments within the Army or Joint Staff. All these efforts fall under Goal 4 of the AAW HCSP - employee engagement.

QUESTION:

[Impact of New Cyber-Security Requirements on Acquisition](#)

For classified programs, the cost to incorporate new and ever-increasing cyber-security measurements into our and our contractor's information systems is enormous. Existing classified contracts now require modification and additional funds to meet these requirements. Due to classification constraints, unable to see what other programs are spending to meet these new requirements and have no basis for evaluating cost proposed by contractors. From a technical perspective, these new cyber-security requirements are also impacting the cost to develop new systems or integrate new systems into existing platforms. Rhetorical question: Are DoD funding levels expected to increase to cover these costs? General questions: What resources are available to the acquisition community on this topic? What perspective do our senior leaders have?

RESPONSE:

This is a great question! My team at the Army DACM Office has a direct link to the OSD functional community dealing with this challenge and with the Defense Acquisition University (DAU) who is building curriculum to address cyber-security. The curriculum development is being approached both from the perspective of what acquisition personnel need to understand

about cyber-security and the impact on programs and dollars as well as what cyber personnel need to understand about acquisition. Goal 1 of the AAW HCSP deals with workforce planning, so we have initiatives addressing current and future threats and the impact to the type of AAW we need for now and in the future.

QUESTION:

[51A assignment at Operational Test Command](#)

An assignment to US Army Operational Test Command (USAOTC) is all about timing for an acquisition officer. Many times an officer will not be the test officer/assistant test officer during the two year period. This position is best suited for branch specific officers already familiar with the technology of the systems being tested. What measures are being taken to ensure this MAPL is value added and keeping a 51A officer on a PM glide path?

RESPONSE:

Good question and this is something we have put deliberate focus on over the past few years and additional recent focus as a result of Goal 1 in the AAW HCSP (workforce planning/shaping). Currently, our assignment guidance is for an officer's first assignment to either be an APM or Contract Management Officer. T&E assignments are developmental and are utilized to broaden an officer's view and knowledge of the acquisition process. The job of a test officer or an evaluation officer is to plan, execute, and evaluate the test. T&E is a strict process and the systems are tested based on requirements, attributes, and parameters and associated metrics and measures. As a T&E officer, you are an unbiased neutral party. Your job is to ensure the program is tested to the standards agreed upon in the Test and Evaluation Master Plan. If you believe the position is not "acquisition related," then you can use the MAPL position survey to inform Proponent. This survey is used by the MAPL review board each year to help determine which positions should be filled with an acquisition officer. Having an officer in a T&E assignment does keep an officer off the PM glide path but being able to navigate the T&E process as a PM is a valuable skill for program managers. Often times the test process can be the reason for cost and schedule overrun in a program; understanding the T&E process as a PM, could be the difference between success and failure.

QUESTION:

[Certification Requirements](#)

My question would be, why do we not follow the certification requirements for Level I, II or III contracting as the DACM and ACC policy memo outline? They both state that DAU is the certifying official. The requirement for level I, II and III on the DAU website waives the degree required for that level if you are a contingency contractor or on a contingency contracting team.

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. There may be some confusion in perception of the policy. DAU identifies the DAWIA requirements in their iCatalog with the three tenets of certification: DAU or equivalent provider training; education; and experience. Each Service Component's DACM Office is responsible for reviewing certification requirements IAW those identified in the DAU iCatalog and processing certification approvals. However, there is a note in the Contracting section of the iCatalog (#12) that states "See 10 U.S.C. 1724 exempts DoD GS-1102 series employees and military equivalents serving in the DoD on or before 30 Sep 2000; contracting

officers with authority to award in excess of the SAT serving on or before 30 Sep 2000; as well as members of the Contingency Contracting Force from the requirement for a Baccalaureate degree.” This statement contains two parts; first, it addresses a time-based issue that covers individuals who were in the Acquisition Workforce on or before a specific date. DoD’s interpretation of 10 US Code, Chapter 87 requires a contingency force member to be actively deployed before the exemption can be used. Early on, deployed NCOs had been “accredited” for this degree requirement due to operational tempo and their ability to comply when they are deployed in a contingency environment only. For the Army, this “accreditation” addressed “warrantable” status while in a contingency environment not to be confused with DAUIA certification levels. DoD also allows each Component Acquisition Executive to add requirements for education, training, and experience to the DAU minimum certification standards. The Army has decided to continue requiring a bachelor’s degree for certification in contracting. This ensures certification means the same thing for all. A commander or director knows the certified NCO meets the same standard officers and civilians in his/her unit meet.

QUESTION:

[MAPL Surveys and Acquisition Professional Assignments](#)

1. What is the entire process for MAPL surveys and how are they utilized? Do MAPL surveys really get utilized to influence future MAPL positions? How much data is required before a decision is made to either maintain or remove a position from future MAPLs? What is the turnaround timeframe for assessing all of the data to determine should a position be removed or maintained?
2. What value is gained from AAW, AMB, and USAAC perspective for staffing USA Operational Test Command (OTC) with Military Acquisition professionals to serve as Test Officers?

Military Test Officer positions within OTC are best suited for basic branch officers such as Signal, ADA, FA, IN and etc. whom already have some familiarity with the technology of the system(s) being tested. The basic branch officer has the required breadth and depth knowledge of the tested system(s) which gives them an overall better understanding of how the system should be deployed in an operational environment.

RESPONSE:

1. Great questions! We use the MAPL process to prioritize Acquisition positions for fill with our limited personnel strength. Annually we review each MAPL position, using a panel of representatives from the field, at the Colonel level, to vote each position based on specific criteria. The data used is a combination of the command’s assessment of the position and is based on: mission, priorities, acquisition content, risk, and key thresholds. This is all collated into a weighted score. The preparations for these reviews is intensive and involves the command and the USAASC Army DACM Office. The spring review looks at the PEOs and CSL MAPLs, while the winter looks at all other commands. This process produces an OML that AMB uses in conjunction with my priorities of fill to assign personnel to commands and ensure only the most critical positions are filled.

Surveys are not viewed by the panel to ensure your anonymity. I want your honest and unfiltered feedback. I use this to track trends in the commands. Once a trend is identified, my Army DACM Office can engage the command to ensure our Acquisition personnel are utilized for Acquisition jobs. It is critical that you fill out the survey. I generally find that many do not, leaving us with incomplete data.

2. All Acquisition Officers have spent 8-10 years in a basic branch prior to transitioning into FA51 Acquisition. Officers in year groups 1996-2004, which are currently a majority of the military acquisition workforce, spent those 8-10 years either in combat operations or peacekeeping missions employing the technology and systems in an operational environment that are being tested at the Test Centers today. It is the responsibility of ATEC as a command to ensure that Acquisition Officers are requisitioned and assigned to positions, systems, and programs that are in line with their operational background. During the MAPL review, there is a block where MOS can be requested for positions. If no MOS is suggested, it will update as branch immaterial and then you will get an officer that may not necessarily be knowledgeable on the systems or programs going through test. Correcting this perceived discrepancy has to start at ATEC during the MAPL review.
3. As a Test Officer involved in a Test, the Officer is part of an IPT. An IPT includes members of the PM, AEC, and OTC. BY participating in the IPT and corresponding Test, Acquisition Officers are gaining knowledge and experience on the T&E process and the inner workings. Yes, many OT events are scheduled 2-5 years out. However, there are "DT" events leading up to the test - OT preparation, documentation, coordination, instrumentation, and planning. All of this is where the professional development occurs. Executing a Test is a fairly easy process if all the planning has been executed to standard. Yes, it would be great to be able to have an officer enter a position at test execution. However, the real knowledge is gained in the planning phase as part of an IPT. An acquisition officer with knowledge of how T&E is conducted will have a greater chance of success as a PM

QUESTION:

[Product Support Managers \(PSM\) Board](#)

Is there a plan to manage the Product Support Managers (PSM) to career broaden them by boarding all vacancies to allow PSMs to gain cross functional experience. Creating a board to enable current PSMs to move between and within PEO provides for the best talented to be retained.

RESPONSE:

Thanks for your question. I too agree that broadening is necessary to retain top talent and develop our future leaders. Our DASA for Acquisition Policy and Logistics office is working a strategic initiative to design a training plan for all life cycle logisticians (occupational series 0346) in the Army. The plan provides the framework to properly develop our PSM community. In addition, the USD AT&L Life Cycle Logistics Functional IPT has a memorandum out that recommends certain courses for continuous learning that they believe will

benefit PSMs and keep their skills relevant. My civilian proponent officers within the Army DACM Office can assist in providing you a copy of the memo if you haven't seen it.

As you may be aware, we currently have a process to centrally select our PMs. As a talent management initiative in FY14, we developed and implemented a process to centrally select civilian Project and Product Directors. Post-utilization of these centrally selected civilians is paramount to the success of our talent management programs. As we assess the need to centrally select and manage other key leader positions, we will apply those best practices within our current talent management programs to develop an enterprise level approach for acquisition talent management.

QUESTION:

[Competition for senior level management positions](#)

How does someone who enters the workforce outside of intern programs obtain the necessary training to compete for senior level positions?

RESPONSE:

Thanks for your question. First, I encourage you to have meaningful discussions with your supervisor and let him/her know your short and long term goals, and I think you could benefit from using our civilian acquisition career models to frame your discussion. The career models are located on the Army DACM Office website, and there is one per acquisition career field. It outlines acquisition training and education programs, DAU certification and continuous learning, CES training, and jobs by grade that may help guide you towards your goals. The career models are located at: <http://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/civilian/career-planning-steps/>

QUESTION:

[Operationalizing Engagement and Leader Development](#)

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss this important area for all Acquisition professionals. I am curious about your views on Engagement and Leader Development following from the published strategy. As stated in the strategic plan, both of these areas are challenging in many acquisition organizations due to the matrixed approach to staffing. Likewise, this is more difficult due to the large number of contracted personnel where some sub-elements of the Department of Defense treat contracted personnel differently and inconsistently. Consequently, I am curious about your vision for implementing such a strategy in organizations with complex personnel and organizational arrangements. What changes do you see to how contractors or matrixed personnel should or can be managed and engaged in order to address and improve engagement and leader development?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. The bottom-line is that our HCSP does not distinguish between the different types of personnel and the AAW in support of our acquisition programs. Whether you provide core or matrix support to an acquisition program, this HCSP applies to you. Every member of the AAW is equally important and relevant to our success as an Acquisition Corps and Army. Additionally, an important tenet of leader development is the ability to understand and utilize proper techniques of employee engagement, specifically setting and managing employee expectations. We know we need to do a better job of supervisory development and the

Army Employee Engagement Task Force is leading an effort to formalize an Army-wide program, and the Army DACM Office is in line with this effort. An initiative within Goal 3 of the HCSP is the establishment of a supervisor onboarding to provide our new acquisition workforce supervisors with the tools to fully engage with the AAW.

QUESTION:

[Shaping the Future Acquisition Workforce](#)

With regard to Goal #1 in the Human Capital Strategic Plan, what tools do you see the AAW workforce having to rapidly replenish its workforce as retirement eligible personnel transition to retirement? The Plan lists 20% of the AAW as now retirement-eligible now, but the current hiring process is still extensive (time wise) in duration from offer to new employee start date. How can we rapidly grow our AAW workforce before we lose the knowledge of our most experienced employees as they retire?

RESPONSE:

Great question! The AAW HCSP has a draft implementation plan with specific objectives, initiatives, IPTs, metrics and end result details. So, we are looking at the retirement challenge as well as the hiring challenge. Goals 1 and 4 of the HCSP address workforce shaping and employee engagement and will explore succession planning initiatives. On 1 October 2016, the Army DACM Office stood up a centralized AAW Hiring Cell at the APG CPAC focused on testing centralized hiring of AAW members and addressing the time it takes to announce, hire, and on-board an AAW. This pilot is testing the PEO community initially. Please also see my response to Dane Patterson regarding EHA Implementation Guidance and the Acquisition Hiring Cell.

QUESTION:

[51C and ECC](#)

Great start with the HCSP! It does not appear to address the issues with 51C career management and force structure (ECC). It does link the path for 51Cs to parallel the 1102s - which is critical. With only 5.4% military in the AAW, makes sense the HCSP would be civilian focused. Will there be an "annex" for 51Cs (and 51As) in the future.

RESPONSE:

I really appreciate the response. We are working hard with our 51C military proponent team to ensure career development for Officers and NCOs is fully incorporated into the HCSP. Even though you may not see specific references to our military, they are part of the workshops and IPTs moving forward. In addition, each command is involved in creating the plan. There is no need for an annex to the plan if we focus our efforts to incorporate them into the overall plan.

QUESTION:

[Acquisition Certification](#)

Who determines the level of acquisition certification per grade level? Is it the ASC or the agency heads? Guidance in DAU is not definitive in this area, only suggests 'typically.'

RESPONSE:

Good question and this is a focus in Goal 1 of the AAW HCSP (workforce planning). Typically, the organization determines the level of acquisition certification based on competencies required for the position (Level III for expert, Level II for journeyman, and Level 1 for entry) and against the USD AT&L Position Category Descriptions for each Acquisition Career Field. However, positions coded as Critical Acquisition Positions (CAPs) must be coded as Level III (expert). The USAASC Army DACM Office provides guidance on typical certification levels for each grade, but it is the organization who makes the final determination.

QUESTION:[Pursuit to establish core business practice AAW partnerships](#)

We're undergoing challenges to support other AAW as a core business practice while trying to obtain them as Govt personnel support, who operate under fee-for-service, as an alternative solution when direct hiring is not permitted, and rather than contracting for a vendor. Will there be a blanket Army MOA and checklist established that will help relieve time consuming obstacles and strengthen the partnership concept for requesting knowledgeable skillset personnel who achieved DAWIA Levels II and III and the accompanied experience?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. I'll ask my Army DACM Office to reach out to you to understand the specific details you mention.

QUESTION:[CES Influencing Leadership Composition](#)

In follow up to an earlier question regarding the potential offering of CES at mobile sites, I think it's something that should be pursued. Absent that, and while also making career advancement opportunities dependent upon completion of CES classes, we may inadvertently be excluding many highly qualified candidates that would excel in leadership positions, and instead be promoting only those willing or able to take extended travel from their homes/families.

RESPONSE:

I appreciate your question and note that CES has been a trending topic at my Virtual Town Hall. Goal 3 of the AAW HCSP has a specific initiative focused on CES and defining the problems associated with quotas, mobile training, and order of merit list type of selection to ensure the most qualified candidates are getting the seats, etc. Please know that my Army DACM Office team is working this challenge and I will ensure it gets the emphasis required.

QUESTION:[DAWDF Funds for Non-Acquisition support personnel](#)

There continues to be confusion on whether non-acquisition employees who primarily support acquisition workforce members are eligible to use DAWDF (Sec852) funds to training and career development. Does the DAWDF law allow for non-acquisition workforce members to use the funds for their career training? See scenario below. Often, non-acquisition employees must only rely on ACTEDS career program funding or local training funds which are severely limited

in most organizations. The non-acquisition support personnel whose responsibility it is to request, justify, track, monitor, execute and reconcile these funds are unable to take advantage of funds for their own career development. For example, a non-acquisition employee who works in an acquisition organization responsible for TDY and PCS travel is not able to take a travel course to improve their skills levels because they are not acquisition although most if not all of the TDY and PCS travel they will do is for acquisition workforce members. Relying on ACTEDS or local funds which are usually nonexistent, means the employee does not get the training that would improve their knowledge in the their non-acquisition career field, but is used to primarily support acquisition workforce members.

RESPONSE:

I appreciate this question and the concern. The purpose of DAWDF is to ensure the DoD acquisition workforce has the capacity, in both personnel and skills, to properly perform the acquisition mission. Funds are also available for the limited purpose of providing training (and associated TDY) in the performance of acquisition-related functions and duties. The Army DACM Office recognizes acquisition attorneys, services acquisition, personnel in support of Operational Contract Support (OCS), and requirements personnel as good examples of non-acquisition personnel who contribute to the acquisition mission by virtue of their duties. These individuals have DAU courses that have been developed to explain the acquisition process from the perspective of these non-acquisition positions, and the Army DACM Office funds this specific training via DAWDF. The training you mention does not meet the intent of DAWDF.

QUESTION:

[Certification](#)

It is encouraged to obtain other certifications beyond the career field one is working in i.e. .Level 3 IT. I completed the requirements for level one purchasing only to be denied since I was not in the career field. Can this be changed to encourage cross functionality training? I have a master degree is procurement and acquisitions at an IT level 3.

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. As I'm sure you are aware, DAWIA certification requires the attainment of three tenets: DAU or equivalent provider training; education; and the appropriate experience. Level 1 Purchasing certification requires 1 year of purchasing experience. If you have not served in a purchasing position (an 1105 occupational series position), it is difficult to determine if you have that experience. You may have been denied certification, but you can submit an appeal through the Certification Management System (CMS) 30 days from the denial date. Provide your reason for justification and indicate where you have met the specific Purchasing experience on your resume. You may also re-apply in CMS on a later time when the appropriate experience is obtained.

QUESTION:

[Operational Test Command Test Officers](#)

There is a small yet crucial segment of the acquisition community being held out of the AWF because they don't fit neatly into any of the career fields, i.e. Test Officers at the Operational Test Command at Fort Hood, TX. As a result, they are denied educational opportunities. Their job series is 0301, so they have no positive education requirement. From their creation it was

believed that the person's operational skills and knowledge that they brought to the job was more valuable than the level of formal education. Now in today's much more technically complex environment, while that operational experience is still highly valued, it is clear that additional training and education is also becoming imperative. Without disrupting the entire workforce by forcing a positive education requirement on the positions, can't something be done for them to get them into the acquisition workforce and open the doors to additional training opportunities?

RESPONSE:

I appreciate your question and insight. Goal 1 of the AAW HCSP deals with workforce planning and determining if we have the right civilian positions coded as acquisition. My goal is never to deny non-acquisition personnel the training needed, but my priority must be the AAW. Your question has a focus on formal education which I can only authorize as a result of DAWIA statute which is for our coded acquisition positions (FA51 Officers, MOS 51C NCOs, and civilians who spend more than 51% of their duties focused on an acquisition mission).

QUESTION:

[Leader Development](#)

Sir, thanks for hosting this Virtual Town Hall. My question is how is the Army Acquisition Corps going to address diversity in the senior leadership ranks - including civilians and military? If you look across the Corps there is very little diversity, specifically related to color. Of course, you, the ACC CDR, and the former AMC CDR are not who I am focusing on...I am specifically focused on the leadership 1 level and 2 levels below you - at the 1 star GO & SES and 06 level of leadership.

RESPONSE:

I appreciate your question and concern. Thank you for participating in my Virtual Town Hall! Goal 1 of the AAW HCSP focuses on workforce planning which includes a scan of our AAW environment. I understand from our data that we have some challenges we will work moving forward. Goal 3 focuses on Leader Development, so as we understand these specific challenges we will have specific initiatives to address.

QUESTION:

[DAWIA certification needs](#)

In terms of skill set needs (the DAWIA certification categories), where do you see our greatest challenges in filling? Where are the greatest needs?

RESPONSE:

I appreciate this question! Currently, we have our greatest challenges in filling and retaining positions in the Contracting, Engineering, Science and Technology Manager, Business-Financial Management, and Business-Cost Estimating Acquisition Career Fields (ACFs). These ACFs are very specialized in their training, education, and experience requirements, and in their business and technical complexity. We must ensure we are tracking attrition and understand the impact to the overall AAW as well as focusing on recruitment and retention of this talent. Goal 1 of the AAW HCSP deals with workforce planning and these types of analyses are important to understand where we need to focus our AAW for now and in the future.

QUESTION:[Professional Development](#)

I've been on the waitlist for the Advanced CES Course for about 3 years. Is there any way to make to shorten the wait time?

RESPONSE:

Your question is definitely a challenge. Goal 3 of the AAW HCSP - Leader Development - has a specific initiative focused on quota allotment for Advanced CES Courses within the PEOs. My DACM Office team is working with G-3/5/7 to understand the full scope of the challenge, identify the exact problem and work on Courses of Action to determine the path ahead. We will ensure the community is updated on any progress we make. In the meantime, please continue to work with the organizational training leads within your organization to see if they will allow you to use one of the organization's quotas. As well, we always suggest individuals apply for any course offering that works with your schedule. That will increase your chances of rolling in off of the waitlist. Advanced CES has definitely been a trending topic in the Virtual Town Hall. Please see my other comments in the CES threads of discussion.

QUESTION:[Follow-up to Eisenhower School Graduate Placement](#)

Sir, I recently graduated from the Eisenhower School (Class of 2016). The bid process for Army Acquisition civilian placement was challenging to say the least. There was a lack of understanding of the process on the part of students until very late in the process, and many bidding organizations never fully understood the potential impact of their bids on students. The process resulted in numerous cases of poor placement of Senior Acquisition Course (SAC) students including into non-acquisition positions and positions that delayed or impeded students' career arcs. How is the Acquisition Support Center and ASA(ALT) working with Army G3/5/7 to address these problems and reduce negative impacts to students, gaining organizations, and the SAC program within the Eisenhower School?

RESPONSE:

Thanks for sharing your personal observations. As you have highlighted, we must improve upon the Senior Enterprise Talent Management (SETM) placement process for our acquisition workforce. As you know, this must be a joint, collaborative effort between us, the ASA(M&RA), and the G3/5/7. The USAASC/Army DACM Office entered the process late last year and we were able to garner some success, but we have a long way to go. We've engaged the SETM Office early this year and the Army DACM Office developed a process to ensure we place Eisenhower and Army War College graduates in broadening and upwardly mobile positions, support the Army enterprise talent goal, and reduce the impacts to AAW students (Goal 3 - Leader Development Initiative within the AAW HCSP).

QUESTION:[Student Loan Repayment Program](#)

CECOM requires a job offer from outside of the Government in order for you to apply for the SLRP. Is this really the intent of the program?

RESPONSE:

No, that is not the intent of the program. The purpose of this program is to repay federally insured student loans as a retention incentive for civilian acquisition employees with critical acquisition skill sets. It takes a significant amount of time and money to develop our AAW members, and we do not want them to even consider leaving whether they have a specific job offer or not. An extensive AAW attrition analysis (Goal 1 - Workforce Planning) was completed within the Army DACM Office that shows certain acquisition career fields, grades, and years of experience at higher risk for leaving the AAW. That is the basis for this retention incentive.

QUESTION:[Civilian Evaluations](#)

Sir, I'm curious on why it appears that civilian performance evaluations/SRPE are now mirroring the military rating system. This puts DA civilians at a disadvantaged position to the military.

RESPONSE:

The updated SRPE we rolled out in FY16 intentionally mirrors the new Officer Evaluation Report (OER). SRPE is a tool to evaluate the potential of civilian employees (in designated grades/broadbands) to perform in positions of increased responsibility. For civilians, the combination of SRPE (future potential) and annual performance evaluations (performance) provide the workforce member a comprehensive look at how they have done and a view on how they will do in the future. I believe this provides civilians with a more comparable position to military vice a disadvantaged position. For example, when applying for centralized selection list (CSL) positions where civilians and military compete head to head for best qualified, the more quality; highly-rated SRPEs, the better. Review Boards tend to put more focus on SRPEs than on annual evaluations. The SRPE enables an assessment of a civilian employee's potential for these opportunities, when compared to his/her peers as well as his/her military counterparts. In addition, it provides a valuable tool for managing the AAW talent for potential selection into these special senior leadership programs/positions.

QUESTION:[DAWIA Engineering needs to be more technical](#)

This is more of an observation, than a question, but it could elicit conversation.

Simply stated, I would recommend the DAWIA certifications become more technically oriented.

I am a GS-0855 Electronics Engineer, and I have Level 3 Engineering Certification.

I can tell you that the DAWIA certs are great for Acquisition Law, and Acquisition Policy, but I feel that the "Engineering" side of certs need to be more emphasized. For example, Systems in the Army are becoming more Software Centric. How do we include courses that allow our Engineers to stay on the cutting edge of Software Development? Perhaps, as a suggestion, as part of the Engineering Certification, include a full course on programming Android Phones?

Software Engineering is just one facet of the broad field of Engineering, however. Perhaps the DAWIA certs need to be tailored to the broad fields within Engineering, i.e. Mechanical, Aerospace, Software, Electronics, Electrical, Materials, Chemical, Civil and Computer Engineering? I feel this will greatly help our Army, since I'm sure you would agree, Technology is a vital part of our overall force effectiveness and capabilities, and our Civilian Army Engineers

would be more fully engaged, as their skills would be brought up to date with the latest developments in Technology.

RESPONSE:

Thanks for your observation and for starting the conversation. Goal 2 in the AAW HCSP focuses on professional development, and the intent is to broaden the aperture on what we should be doing vice what we are currently doing. Detailed engineering experience is usually gained in supporting a laboratory, an Engineering Center, or in a Program Office working a specific technology area. DAU does a good job of teaching Engineers how to be Engineers in the DoD business environment, and they provide the basics. They also do a good job of incorporating continuous learning across all acquisition career fields. A good example is the recent addition of ACQ 160, Program Protection Planning Awareness; a cyber-awareness course that was added to the Engineer core plus guide. ACQ 160 will have an emphasis on training principles and policies of systems engineering. The course will provide awareness training on threats, vulnerabilities, risks, and required mitigations on DoD systems. Functional Leaders in OSD are working with DAU and the Services to incorporate more technical competencies into their curriculum. In the Army DACM office, we have created some opportunities like the Master's Degree in Systems Engineering centralized program with the Naval Postgraduate School. I have proponent officers in my Army DACM Office who attend Functional IPTs and can carry your message and concern. Remember that we have Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF) dollars, and Commands/PEOs can address some technical-based AAW initiatives in the interim.

QUESTION:

[Phased Retirement](#)

Any insight on how Army is taking advantage of the Phased Retirement in support of Workforce Planning?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for the question. We still have not received implementation guidance from DoD and Army leadership in order to put phased retirement into effect. Once guidance is received, we'll review for potential incorporation in support of workforce planning.

QUESTION:

[Workforce](#)

We have been in discussion for decades on workforce recruiting, retention communication and the hiring process. It seems this has been a topic of discussion for decades. When will the ACQ workforce be able to obtain and maintain the proper amount of employees in order to bridge the gaps and lessen the stress of the overworked workforce?

RESPONSE:

I'm not sure that I have the perfect response to this question. This HCSP really addresses the question of how do we try to continuously improve the quality of our workforce while meeting the demands of a very dynamic environment. I'm very encouraged by the thought that went into this plan but I acknowledge that we will have work to do to adjust this plan as we continue to

collect feedback from people like you. I ask that you continue to engage with your coworkers, supervisors and the DACM office on this topic.

QUESTION:

[Why is emphasis put on a Master's for GS14/NH 4 positions instead of experience as a deciding factor?](#)

I have over 16 years of experience within the Defense business as well as acquisition and because I did not get my masters, I am rejected from NH 4 positions within the army, but I can be a chief engineer/PM for a large program with industry? Why the push for masters as a civilian when we are not given the same opportunity as military to take the time to get our masters? The programs that are offered to civilians to get their masters are very limited as I have been on a waiting list of 3 years now.

RESPONSE:

To my knowledge, most positions do not singularly focus on an advanced degree requirement. Experience is invaluable and education is certainly complementary. As professionals, I believe we should always strive for increased development and experience. I also believe that this is what makes our workforce so special. I would also add that we do have a number of centralized programs available to you (ATAP and NPS). I encourage you to keep applying.

QUESTION:

[Workforce Expansion](#)

Services Acquisitions have increased significantly to the point where we spend more money on services than on products.

This is a three part question:

1. Does the Army recognize the need to use a professional acquisition workforce for the management of services acquisitions?
2. Does the Army recognize the need to manage certain services acquisitions (based on thresholds) as programs of record (cost, schedule, performance) and not just contracts?
3. When will the Army start investing in growing the AAW to work within Commands and Agencies that desperately need program managers to manage their billion dollar contracts?

RESPONSE:

Thanks for the questions! The Army absolutely recognizes the services community as an integral part of the acquisition mission. Honorable Kendall assigned a Services Acquisition Functional Leader who stood up a Functional IPT in 2012 to address the importance of services, and the Army is a member of the team. We have committed assets in DASA(P) to support the services workforce, and are busy setting up the framework for an approved training outline using DAU for both non-acquisition and acquisition services workforce members. I think these efforts detail a commitment to train and professionalize the people who manage billions of dollars for the Department. I need to think through growing the number of PMs within the commands. As

with most things in the Army, we are limited in our resources. I think that a realignment of positions is more likely based on how critical that position is to the organization.

QUESTION:

[Military Rating Scheme and Career Impacts](#)

Sir, with more officers coming over to the AC branch as mid to senior Captains and the push to place 51A AC officer in APM jobs what guidance is being given to senior AC officers regarding fair rating practices and career path. Specifically, due to small rating profiles some officers face multiple HQ ratings in their KD APM time. This issue is further impacted by Senior Rater's not interacting with subordinates.

RESPONSE:

I appreciate both your question and your concerns. In my view, being an OER rating official is the most important and challenging job a senior leader has. I know that our senior leaders take that responsibility very seriously. I expect rating officials to make the tough calls and write OERs in a manner that accurately portrays an Officer's performance and potential to help centralize selection boards to select the best Officers in the Army as future senior leaders. Selection boards are informed on the challenges and impacts of immature profiles and small rated officer populations in an effort to ensure that Officers in those situations are not disadvantaged.

QUESTION:

[Mentoring?](#)

What are your plans for an AAW mentoring program? One was started a couple of years ago, unclear about what happened to it.

RESPONSE:

Mentoring is extremely important and something I regularly discuss. The pilot that we ran a few years ago did not receive a lot of participation. That said, although I do not have an immediate plan to have an overarching Army DACM mentoring program, we have a number of programs at various locations and commands. Please visit our website on mentoring for a wealth of resources: <http://asc.army.mil/web/career-development/mentoring-resources/>

QUESTION:

[Filling the gaps in the Acquisitions Workforce caused by Increased Retirements](#)

In December 2005, CAPPMS identified that 33% of that population would be eligible for full benefits retirement by 2011. Then, a 5-year projection for all of those eligible for retirement as well as early retirement would grow to over 60%. Did this turn out to be true? If so, how was the gap closed? Today, what percent are currently eligible for full benefits retirement and early outs, and what is the 5-year projection? Providing incentives to extend 3-6 months would provide the retiring generation an exceptional opportunity to fully transition new in-coming employees; however there must be an individual transition plan generated. This is not just additional time to hang onto a job for a few months. And what is the Government doing to entice young up-coming professionals to venture into and make a career of Army Acquisitions?

RESPONSE:

From an IPT member: Data across the country shows people are lagging eligible retirement dates by around an average of 4 years. So that would put the beginning of our bow wave in PEO GCS of retirements kicking off 2 years from now. We have asked people what their plans are and for those who are willing to provide a projected bin of 1-2 years 3-5 and 5+ it shows that the estimates are about right. So for PEO GCS, the worst churn is about to begin starting now with a rapid increase in 2 years lasting for 6 years. Part of this human capital strategy is poised to work this issue. We have begun forecasting and creating competency management steering groups to get ahead of the bow wave and manage in a proactive manner. Identifying critical positions, identifying key competencies and finding ways to assess gaps, promoting upcoming vacancies over the 5 years and helping prepare those who are interested in sharpening their competencies through training and developmental assignments. Many of the initiatives in the HCSP are meant to help in this process.

From LTG Williamson: Thanks for the question and thanks to Terry for her reply. I don't have immediate access to the demographic data but the trends that Terry referenced are consistent with what we are seeing.

QUESTION:[CES Advanced Training Locations](#)

CES Advanced appears to only be available in a few locations, mainly Ft. Leavenworth. Are there plans to bring back the mobile training team and make the course available at more locations? The course is required for senior leadership positions, but not readily accessible both because of location and enrollment caps.

RESPONSE:

CES is quite a popular topic. G-3/5/7 Civilian Leader and Training plans to have 2-3 mobile training teams this year. The dates have not been formally announced. We are going to continue to pursue access to more quotas.

QUESTION:[Incentives for employees](#)

Would it be possible to incentivize employees in certain occupation series that have no college debt? As a veteran who utilized my GI Bill to earn my degree, it is not fair that others that come aboard are offered college loan payoffs as incentive while those of us without any college loans/debt do not receive any incentive to stay aboard. I think we should be offered a similar retention incentive in the form of a cash bonus of a similar dollar amount to the tuition loan repayment that others receive and sign the 36 month/ 3 year agreement that those with student loans sign. Is this a possibility?

RESPONSE:

I like how you are thinking! Because it takes a significant amount of time and money to get our Army Acquisition Workforce (AAW) trained, educated, and certified, we do not want our talent walking out the door. The AAW Student Loan Repayment Program was one retention incentive instituted to address this challenge using the Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Fund (DAWDF). I will definitely have my team look into different ways to incentivize our Army

Acquisition Workforce as you suggest. Check out Goal 4 of the AAW HCSP for the employee engagement focus that will consider innovative retention incentives. I think that the team would also be excited to hear any thoughts that you may have.

QUESTION:

[How does the Army Reserve component of the Acquisition Corps fit into the plan?](#)

The Army Reserves provides FA 51C Contracting Officers and FA 51A Program Managers. The 51C's are brought on active duty to augment the contracting commands and support certification, but the 51A's are usually precluded from acquisition positions which are CSL unless Active/Guard Reserve (AGR). How is the Reserve force part of the AAW Human Capital Strategic Plan?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. Within my Army DACM Office, I have two Reserve Component Proponent Officers whose main goal is to advocate for the Reserves and National Guard. Goal 1 of the AAW HCSP is focused on Shaping as part of the implementation plan and we are working the challenges of bringing the Reserves into the total force concept. We are not there yet but I would ask that you continue to engage as we work our way through this one.

QUESTION:

[The inability to compete for career broadening opportunities due to CES](#)

Can you talk to the reasoning why the Army continues to mandate the need for CES Advance, yet they put personnel into the curricula that may be eligible for retirement within the next three to 5 years? Those of us in the workforce who are interested in pursuing other opportunities within the Army are unable to apply for other grade appropriate training (Kennedy School, Senior Service College, etc.) due to the toll gate that is CES (Intermediate and Advanced). This is leading to well trained and educated workforce personnel leaving the Army for other opportunities with our sister services and other Federal agencies.

RESPONSE:

Good question. CES is an Army requirement for civilians. Army allocates quotas for CES to commands based on eligible population size. G-3/5/7 has allowed flexibility the past few FYs to allow individuals to apply for some opportunities (Harvard and Federal Executive Institute) without completion of CES Advanced. My understanding is that the Army removed that flexibility this FY and are again mandating CES Advanced for all Army centralized education programs. I mention all this because I have limited influence. However, I do have influence over our own programs, such as our Defense Acquisition University - Senior Service College Fellowship. I have allowed flexibility in mandating the CES Advanced Course completion prior to applying. I will reexamine that requirement again before our next application window. Goal 3 of the AAW HCSP - Leader Development - has a specific initiative focused on quota allotment for Advanced CES Courses within the PEOs. We will continue to work with G-3/5/7 to advocate for increased throughput and the second/third order effects if there is not an increase.

QUESTION:

[Do you support workforce members who want to change Acquisition Career Fields mid-career?](#)

I'm certified Level 3 in Life Cycle Logistics, an Acquisition career field that was chosen for me

eight years ago by my leadership who cited "The needs of the Army". I find the new Acquisition career models encouraging (wish we had them 10 years ago) but they don't appear to encourage workforce members like me with 16+ years of service to apply for broadening or strategic assignments in other career fields. What's your thoughts on cross-training of GS 13/14/15s? For example: If a logistician wants to change from Life Cycle Logistics to Contracting or Engineering. Are they forced to start completely over in career progression?

RESPONSE:

My belief is it is never too late to broaden your experience especially for those in the GS-12/13 (or broadband equivalent) range. The career model is a great step forward and I too wish we had developed it years ago. Please look into the Competitive Development Group. This program is set up for GS-12/13 acquisition workforce members to participate in a 3 year developmental program focusing on broadening assignments and complementary leadership development courses. In addition, work with a senior mentor to search out a developmental assignment. Goals 2 & 3 of the AAW HCSP focus on professional and leader development.

QUESTION:

[EHA Implementation Guidance and Acquisition hiring cell](#)

Sir, for the benefit of the group could you provide any insights/update on the Army's pending expedited hiring authority (EHA) implementation guidance as well as the proposal to create a pilot acquisition hiring cell to centralize acquisition hiring actions?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. EHA is a critical hiring authority for our AAW and an enterprise implementation approach is definitely a step in the right direction. My understanding is that OSD guidance was updated in December 2015 to address original language focused on veteran's preference, and that our Army G-1 has updated our implementation guidance. Final coordination is pending, but I expect Army guidance will roll out by the end of this quarter. The AAW Hiring Cell is an AAW HCSP initiative - Goal 1 (workforce planning). It stood up on 1 October 2016 at Aberdeen Proving Ground as an 18-month pilot program focused on centralized acquisition hiring with a goal of standardizing acquisition hiring authority interpretation. Our ASA(ALT) Principal Deputy, Ms. Steffanie Easter, and the Army's Civilian Human Resources Agency (CHRA) Director, Ms. Rhonda Diaz, collaborated on this effort and an MOA was signed by both to explore this centralized AAW hiring concept. The pilot is currently focused on PEO hiring, but the ultimate goal, pending metrics capture, is a centralized hiring cell for all AAW hiring in the future. In addition, this team is working in close coordination with my Army DACM Office on EHA.